

POSITION DESCRIPTION <i>(Please Read Instructions on the Back)</i>								1. Agency Position No. S000116	
2. Reason for Submission [] Redescription [] New		3. Service [] Hdqtrs. [X] Field		4. Employing Office Location		5. Duty Station		6. OPM Certification No.	
[] Reestablishment [X] Other Explanation <i>(Show any positions replaced)</i> <div style="text-align: center;"> Standard PD Approved for Service-wide Use: <u> /s/ </u> Dawn Phillips </div>				7. Fair Labor Standards Act [X] Exempt [] Nonexempt		8. Financial Statements Required [] Executive Personnel [] Employment and Financial Financial Disclosure Interests		9. Subject to IA Action [X] Yes [] No	
				10. Position Status [X] Competitive [] Excepted (Specify in Remarks) [] SES (Gen.) [] SES (CR)		11. Position is [] Supervisor/Mgr (2 - GSSG) [] Supervisor(4 - Title V) [] Mgmt Official (5 – Title 5) [] Leader (6) [] Team leader (7) [] Other (8)		12. Sensitivity [] 1-Non-Sensitive [] 2-Non-critical Sensitive [] 3-Critical Sensitive [] 4. Special Sensitive [] 5. Moderate Risk [] 6. High Risk	
								14. Agency Use	

15. Classified/Graded by	Official Title of Position	Pay Plan	Occupational Code	Grade	Initials	Date
a. U.S. Office of Personnel Management	Full Performance Level GS-_____					
b. Department, Agency or Establishment						
c. Second Level Review						
d. First Level Review	Supervisory Park Ranger	GS	0025	13		
e. Recommended by Supervisor or Initiating Office						

16. Organizational Title of Position Visitor Services Manager		17. Name of Employee <i>(if vacant, specify)</i>	
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18. Department, Agency or Establishment Department of the Interior		c. Third Subdivision	
a. First Subdivision U.S Fish and Wildlife Service		d. Fourth Subdivision	
b. Second Subdivision Region ____		e. Fifth Subdivision	

19. Employee Review--This is an accurate description of the major duties and responsibilities of my position		Signature of Employee <i>(optional)</i>	
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20. Supervisory Certification. I certify that this is an accurate statement of the major duties and responsibilities of this position and its organizational relationships, and that the position is necessary to carry out Government functions for which I am responsible. This certification is made with the		knowledge that this information is to be used for statutory purposes relating to appointment and payment of public funds, and that false or misleading statements may constitute violations of such statutes or their implementing regulations.	
a. Typed Name and Title of Immediate Supervisor		b. Typed Name and Title of Higher-Level Supervisor or Manager <i>(optional)</i> James W. Kurth Deputy Assistant Director, National Wildlife Refuge System	
Signature	Date	Signature <div style="text-align: center;">/S/</div>	Date 6 Jan 2005

21. Classification/Job Grading Certification. I certify that this position has been classified/graded as required by Title 5, U.S. Code, in conformance with standards published by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management or, if no published standards apply directly, consistently with the most applicable published standards.		22. Position Classification Standards Used in Classifying/Grading Position PCS for GS-0025 SGEG	
Type Name and Title of Official Taking Action		Information for Employees. The standards, and information on their application, are available in the personnel office. The classification of the position may be reviewed and corrected by the agency or the U.S. Office of Personnel Management. Information on classification/job grading appeals, and complaints on exemption from FLSA, is available from the personnel office or the U.S. Office of Personnel Management.	
Signature	Date		

23. Position Review	Initials	Date	Initials	Date	Initials	Date	Initials	Date	Initials	Date
a.. Employee <i>(optional)</i>										
b. Supervisor										
c. Classifier										

24. Remarks

25. Description of Major Duties and Responsibilities *(See Attached)*

Supervisory Park Ranger GS 025 – 13 (Visitor Services Manager)

Introduction

Incumbent serves as the Visitor Services Manager on a National Wildlife Refuge, Refuge Complex, or Wetland Management District and manages the visitor services (VS) program. (Although the terms “refuge” and “Refuge Manager” are used, this position description encompasses all three types of resource lands.)

This refuge will include all or essentially all of the following:

- multiple interest groups, partners and a complex volunteer program,
- significant user conflicts,
- significant off-site visitor services and communication program,
- high congressional and/or public interest,
- controversial visitor use and/or management issues,
- compatible priority public uses (this will almost always include five or six of the priority uses),
- proximity to metropolitan area or gateway community,
- significant and multiple public safety issues (law enforcement, environmental contaminants, natural hazards, and illegal activities),
- complex or conflicting jurisdictional authorities with other agencies and entities,
- complex regulations, and
- visitation is near or exceeds the refuge recreational carrying capacity at one or more locations or programs.

The incumbent is responsible for budget, staff supervision, and overall program management. The incumbent plays a key role in the planning and administration of the total refuge program, in that the visitor services program affects other refuge management programs and is an integral part of the overall refuge management. The incumbent provides technical expertise, provides leadership, and directs staff efforts in all areas of visitor services management in a high quality, large, complex visitor services program involving the full array of priority and secondary uses. This position is responsible for the overall direction, review, planning, and coordination of all visitor services program activities.

Work is directed towards providing the public with safe, accessible, and quality wildlife-dependent recreation opportunities (e.g., hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, wildlife photography, environmental education and interpretation) as described in the Refuge Improvement Act of 1997. Incumbent serves as a member of the refuge management team and, as the VS technical expert, ensures recreational activities are appropriate, compatible, and support the refuge’s resource management objectives.

Incumbent has an active role in assisting regional and national visitor services programs in training and policy development. Employee is a recognized technical expert in one or more areas of visitor services (e.g.; visitor center design and construction, environmental education program development, planning and implementation of a complex hunting program, support group and partnership development, user conflict management and economic benefits and impacts of refuge operations on local communities.)

Incumbent provides technical expertise in the area of visitor services to other refuges. This includes serving as a mentor and providing cross program training opportunities. The employee participates on station program review teams, and regional and national committees to develop VS policy. Incumbent represents the Service in a variety of settings including local, regional, and national.

Major Duties

Program Management

- o Develops, manages and maintains a high quality and balanced visitor services program by providing opportunities in the six priority wildlife-dependant recreation activities, as appropriate to the refuge, and the secondary uses and other programs that may support them.
- o Coordinates with refuge managers, refuge biologists, and the state to develop a comprehensive hunting and fishing program. Responsible for daily hunt operations which may include but is not limited to permit and fee collection, operating check stations, coordination with law enforcement, and distribution of regulations. Some programs may involve facility development, restrictions on use, and administering drawings for fees and permits.
- o Oversees the operation of all Visitor Centers or contact stations on the refuge or complex, encompassing visitor management, interpretive design, information services, environmental education, concession management, volunteers, and refuge support group program coordination.
- o Develops and implements interpretive and environmental education programs. Programs reach a wide range of audiences and address identified resource issues that may reach outside the refuge boundary. Establishes and implements partnerships with local educational institutions to develop and manage environmental education programs that meet both the mission and goals of the Fish and Wildlife Service and refuge and curricula needs of the schools.
- o Provides for wildlife observation and photography opportunities. Develops and provides programs and facilities to enable visitors to have optimal wildlife observation/photography opportunities without undue impacts to wildlife or its habitat.
- o Provides for and manages secondary wildlife-dependant recreation such as camping, picnicking, berry picking, boating, and horseback riding in support of one or more of the primary uses.
- o Manages conflict between user groups through the use of various techniques such as time/zone management, limited access, and permits. Determines when to open or close an

area to a particular use or means of access. Determines and analyzes recreation carrying capacity and makes program adjustments as necessary.

- o Develops compatibility determinations for all visitor services activities and facilities.
- o Manages conflicts with wildlife and habitat management goals. Coordinates with other appropriate refuge staff to analyze and reduce impacts of visitor use.
- o Analyzes visitor services program for gaps and determines the need to develop and implement appropriate policies, procedures, and standards to be used by all affected groups (visitor services staff, concessionaires, other refuge staff, partners, etc.).
- o Coordinates with other refuge staff to measure impacts of visitor use on wildlife/habitat; develop, conduct, and analyze surveys and visitor use studies; minimize conflicts between the refuge's visitor use and wildlife and management goals, and recommends program changes as needed. Measures expectations, quality and satisfaction regarding the refuge visitor services program. This includes economic preparing and conducting benefit studies, demographic studies, recreational carrying capacity surveys, and visitor satisfaction surveys.
- o Oversees public use in special designated areas (Wilderness, Research Natural Areas, Closed Areas, and Public Use Natural Areas) according to specific legislative and policy requirements.
- o Serves as a technical expert within the VS program through the development of refuge specific products (such as brochures, fact sheets, and portable exhibits), special events (such as National Wildlife Refuge Week, International Migratory Bird Day and National Fishing Week), facilities, and cross-program training. Provides program management assistance to other refuges within the region.

Planning

- o Serves on the Comprehensive Conservation Plan planning team and acts as the station's technical expert regarding visitor services. Provides assistance to other refuges in the region.
- o Coordinates, develops and implements the Visitor Services Plan and the associated step down plans for the VS program, such as: Sign Plan, Interpretive Plan, Environmental Education Plan, Hunt Plan, and Fishing Plan. Serves as planning team member and the refuge's technical expert for Visitor Services issues during preparation and reviews of the refuge's Comprehensive Conservation Plan. Coordinates with State agencies and other refuge personnel. Prepares documents for Federal Register publication as appropriate.
- o Incorporates, manages, and addresses cultural resources requirements on the refuge, ensuring compliance in all projects, Coordinates with State Historic Preservation Officer and Regional Historic Preservation Officers.
- o Incorporates, manages, and addresses universal accessibility on the refuge, ensuring compliance in all projects incorporating Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

- o Develops refuge site plans that offer and include a seamless visual experience through the use of uniform design and materials that link all visitor facilities from entry to exit including decks, platforms, trails, buildings and landscaping.

Administration

- o Budget
 - Develops and manages refuge's visitor services budget. Participates fully in the refuge's budget planning, development and execution.
 - Develops funding opportunities, outside of traditional Federal sources, to enhance the visitor services program by working with partners to apply for challenge cost share, volunteer/friends group grants, contributed funds account, and other budget enhancement packages. Completes all necessary reporting requirements.
 - Develops projects and funding packages for Refuge Operating Needs Systems (RONS), Maintenance Management Systems (RONS), and Service Asset Maintenance Management System (SAMMS)], and Visitor Facility Enhancements, Transportation Enhancements (Refuge Roads), and Refuge Roads requests. Pursues and makes use of non-traditional and special funding sources such as funds to repair flood and storm damage, remove contaminants, and donated funds from organizations such as the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.
 - Develops, manages, and implements policies and procedures for charging user and entrance fees under the Recreation Fee Demonstration Program and other legal authorities, and ensures that fees are managed and expended according to fee program guidelines.
- o Contracting
 - For the VS function, identifies requirements, develops scopes of work and cost estimates associated with contracted activities such as concessions, professional services, and maintenance and janitorial services of facilities. Coordinates with the regional Division of Contracting and General Services to develop contracts, select contractors, and monitor contractor performance. May serve as contracting Officer's Technical Representative for concession operations and other professional service contracts.
 - Administers the refuge's program for commercial and non-commercial special use permits, and other permits as needed. This includes reviewing requests and applications, writing (and at the discretion of the Refuge Manager) issuing permits. Types of permits may include: hunting, photography, camping, commercial fishing and trapping

Partners

- o Develops and manages partnerships with community organizations and corporations (Scouts, service organizations, local governments and businesses).
- o Serves as the refuge's liaison with refuge support groups (i.e., friends' groups and cooperating associations). Ensures cooperative working relationships, develops and implements projects, and ensures compliance with Service policy.

- o Coordinates with adjacent landowners, state, Federal, tribal, and non-profit organizations, including those with jurisdictional overlap, for the purpose of stimulating cooperation and joint planning.
- o Develops, manages, and implements Memoranda of Agreement and Memoranda of Understanding for all visitor services partnerships.
- o Proactively develops a variety of visitor services partnerships that are beneficial to the FWS and its mission with corporate, conservation and other non-government organizations.
- o Facilitates the establishment, develops relationships, and coordinates with Refuge Support Groups. Coordinates refuge requests and needs for special project funding, donated services and goods, and cost share programs.

Volunteers/Others

- o Establishes and maintains a comprehensive refuge volunteer program as described in the Volunteer and Community Partnership Act. Recruits, trains, and provides support for volunteers and those participating in conservation programs. Uses volunteers and cooperators from a variety of sources such as Senior Volunteer Corps, Student Conservation Association, AmeriCorps, Scouts, RV Campers, and Youth Conservation Corps. Coordinates all refuge volunteer and community partnership activities supporting visitor services, natural resources, maintenance, and administrative programs.

Facilities Management

- o Manages and maintains visitor facilities to prevent hazards to public safety. Coordinates repairs and upgrades with maintenance staff. Ensures that all visitor facilities are properly maintained.
- o Coordinates and oversees all visitor facility planning, design, construction, and maintenance. Provides technical expertise to other refuges in the region regarding the development and maintenance of visitor facilities.
- o Develops operational plans for all visitor facilities, addressing issues such as building opening and closing times, staffing, cleaning schedules, and routine maintenance.

Communication

- o Serves as the refuge's primary media contact, functioning as the station's public affairs officer. Coordinates those activities through the Regional External Affairs Office as appropriate. Develops contacts with all media outlets including print, radio and television.
- o Ensures that Regional and Service standards, guidelines, and policies are followed in the production of all communication media including film, publications, and web pages.
- o Develops, coordinates, and implements refuge or issue specific outreach and communication plans for key issues which may result in various outreach activities such as public meetings/hearings and Congressional briefings.
- o Plans and manages special events on the refuge and coordinates off-site participation in events such as state fairs, festivals, county fairs, etc.

- o May represent the Service in appropriate external forums such as Chambers of Commerce, State environmental education committees, and with other Federal agencies.

Legislation and Policy

- o Participates on national and regional teams as a recognized technical expert in one or more areas of visitor services (e.g., visitor centers design and construction, environmental education program development, planning and implementation of a complex hunting or fishing program, support group and partnership development, or user conflict management.)
- o Interprets and implements VS policy and legislation.
- o Serves as a technical expert to other refuges in the interpretation and implementation of visitor services related legislation and policy applicable at the refuge level.
- o Develops refuge specific VS policy, procedures, programs and operating systems which reflect and implement national and regional policy.

Supervision

- o Spends at least 25 percent of the time providing technical and administrative supervision for subordinate staff. Plans work to be accomplished by subordinates, sets and adjusts priorities, and prepares schedules for completion of work. Assigns work to subordinates based on priorities, selective consideration of the difficulty and requirements of assignments, and the capabilities of the employees. Develops performance standards and evaluates work performance of subordinates. Gives advice, counsel, or instruction to employees on both work and administrative matters.
- o Hears and resolves complaints from employees. Hears group grievances and refers more serious unresolved complaints to higher-level supervisor or manager. Effects minor disciplinary measures such as warnings and recommends other action in more serious cases. Interviews candidates for positions; recommends appointments, promotions, and reassignments to such positions. Identifies and provides for training needs. Finds ways to improve production or increase the quality of work directed.
- o Provides leadership, allocates resources, conducts recruitment and outreach, and implements activities to accomplish multi-cultural organization direction and Equal Opportunity and Civil Rights requirements, goals, policies, and objectives.
- o Ensures work conditions conform to agency safety programs. Identifies and corrects job safety and health hazards, instructs employees and volunteers on safety requirements of assignments, and reviews and reports loss incidents in accordance with Department, Bureau, and Office of Worker's Compensation Programs regulations.

Public Safety

- o Coordinates public safety issues with the law enforcement program, identifies and addresses public safety issues and concerns, such as facility conditions and potential hazards, and ensures that appropriate visitor safety and education information is communicated through media such as brochures, visitor contacts, and signage. Participates in the development and implementation of the station's Law Enforcement Plan.

<p><input type="checkbox"/> (If checked.) Supervises the refuge's law enforcement program and is a line supervisor over commissioned law enforcement officers. With the assistance of Regional Visitor Services and Regional Refuge Law Enforcement staff, develops the refuge's Law Enforcement Plan.</p>
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Factors

1. Knowledge Required by the Position

Knowledge of conservation and natural resource management principles and practices in order to incorporate them into educational programs, exhibits, and other visitor services programs.

Understanding of habitat requirements and ecological relationships of wildlife and knowledge of organizational and political factors affecting visitor services programming and planning.

Knowledge of outdoor recreation principles and practices and their integration into resource management and conservation. Knowledge of pertinent aspects of economics, sociology, and behavioral sciences to gather and interpret public interest in outdoor recreation, to collect and analyze related data, and to identify trends in visitor preferences and needs in order to design and present programs, events, materials, and facilities to meet users' demands and interests.

Administrative skills in order to ensure that logistical arrangements, supplies, publications, and services are available to implement the visitor services program, to ensure the adequacy of funding and human resources, and to coordinate the visitor services program with other aspects of management operations and policies.

Skill in oral, written, and graphic communications and skill in communicating with a variety of audiences and public groups using a full range of communications media.

Ability to recruit, train, supervise, and motivate employees and volunteers. Ability and knowledge in human resources theories, policies, and practices to evaluate employee effectiveness, identify training needs and provide training, counsel employees, establish performance standards, write position descriptions, appraise performance, recommend personnel actions, awards, and disciplinary actions, and deal effectively with employee grievances.

Knowledge in consensus building, collaboration, facilitation, and problem solving in dealing with the public, vendors, contractors, support groups, volunteers, and management at all levels of the Service and with outside organizations to conduct wildlife oriented recreation and education related activities.

Skill in creative and innovative planning and interpretive ability in the field of recreation management, interpretive design and writing, and natural history. Skill in developing and adapting guides, methods, procedures, and training techniques.

Knowledge and understanding of the Fish and Wildlife Service and National Wildlife Refuge System history, management methods, policies, procedures, relationships to other agencies, and budgetary processes. Ability to analyze, evaluate, plan, develop, execute, coordinate, and advise on all aspects of the visitor services program.

Ability to provide leadership at the local, regional, and national level in administering the various aspects of the visitor services program and its relationship with other management programs.

A thorough knowledge of the Visitor Services programs in the Fish and Wildlife Service, their policies and applications, potential affects and impacts, and relationship with other management programs. Ability to review and analyze visitor services programs and make sound recommendations for program improvement.

Knowledge of laws and regulations governing refuge management authorizations (e.g., 50 CFR, National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act, Refuge Recreation Act, Endangered Species Act, National Environmental Policy Act, Archeological Resources Protection Act).

Knowledge in initiating and carrying out programs designed to protect the refuge and its visitors from trespass, fire, and unauthorized use as well as the enforcement of refuge regulations and fish and wildlife conservation laws.

2. Supervisory Controls

Incumbent is under the supervision of the Refuge Manager or Deputy, who sets the overall objectives and resources available. The employee and supervisor, in consultation, develop deadlines, projects, and work to be done. The employee is responsible for planning and carrying out assignments, resolving most of the conflicts that arise, coordinating the work with others as necessary, and interpreting policy on own initiative. The employee determines the approach to be taken and the methodology to be used. The employee keeps the supervisor informed of progress or potentially controversial matters. Completed work is reviewed only from an overall standpoint in terms of feasibility, compatibility with other work, or effectiveness in meeting requirements or expected results.

3. Guidelines

Guidelines are provided in the form of basic laws; conservation principles; agency policies; and fundamental refuge, land management, and outdoor recreation philosophies, the Refuge Improvement Act of 1997, and precedent actions. Other guidelines include the Fish and Wildlife Service Manual and other Service and Regional policy, the Code of Federal regulations, the station's Comprehensive Conservation Plan, and applicable step-down management plans.

Guidelines are often vague, contradictory, require modification/adaptation, or are non-existent. Novel, unique, or difficult problems encountered require development of new techniques or methods to solve problems. Incumbent writes policies and procedures to cover station issues and conditions and contributes to the development of new regional and national policies and procedures.

Judgment is required to interpret and convert legislation and Service objectives into a visitor services program and make use of all refuge resources for the public while protecting natural resources specific to the refuge.

4. Complexity

The incumbent manages a very complex visitor services program on a national wildlife refuge, ensuring a quality experience for visitors in all compatible priority public uses. He/she is

recognized as an authority in one or more specific VS programs and operations such as visitor center design and construction, environmental education program development, planning and implementation of complex hunting and fishing programs, support group and partnership development, user conflict management and recreational carrying capacity, and economic benefits and impacts of refuge operations on local communities. Direction, planning, execution, and coordination of duties and responsibilities are complicated and difficult because of the scope and varied aspects of the visitor services program provided by the refuge, and the number and diversity of programs that require facilities and services necessary to effectively serve the refuge visitor and to maintain the resource. The incumbent is responsible for the coordination and integration of resource protection, management and conservation, and visitor protection, focusing on wildlife dependent recreation and educational activities. Often this integration results in unusual, unique, and controversial problems, that the incumbent must resolve or for which he/she can make recommendations that can be implemented at the appropriate level. Decisions and recommendations for solution of problems, policies and practices established, and public contacts of the incumbent have a broad impact, both on and off of the refuge.

The assignments are diverse and extensive in programmatic content and in application to different community and refuge situations. Program situations may be highly controversial or precedent setting for the VS program. Program overview and accomplishment relies on a thorough understanding of field operations and needs, regional and national relationships, and the external or political influences that affect them.

5. Scope and Effect

The purpose of the work is to manage one of the largest and most complex VS programs in the National Wildlife Refuges system, to lead the refuge's outreach and public affairs efforts, and serve as the refuge's spokesperson to the media and in other forums. A secondary purpose of the position is to advise other refuges in the region and serve as a technical expert and resource on visitor services issues. Public use is a major activity on the station and the incumbent's activities are of such magnitude, complexity, importance, and level of public interest that the employee plays a key role in planning and administration of the total station program. The incumbent's work has a direct effect on the quality and overall experience of refuge visitors and their perception of the Service as a responsible steward of the nation's public lands and natural resources, and can have a significant impact on their understanding and level of commitment to resource conservation. The incumbent's work also ensures the safety and well being of refuge visitors and employees and the protection and upkeep of refuge facilities. By ensuring that recreational uses of the refuge are compatible and appropriate, the incumbent has an impact on the long-term health and conservation of the station's natural and cultural resources. By providing expert technical advice to other refuges and through participation in Regional and Service teams and working groups, the incumbent affects methods and policies Region- and Service-wide and influences the long-term direction of the Service's visitor services program.

6. Personal Contacts

Recurring contacts are made with refuge visitors; Service personnel from all levels and programs; State and local officials; officials from other Federal agencies; a variety of interest groups, both supportive and in opposition to the activities and policies of the refuge; non-profit organizations; local agencies, concessionaires, contractors, and refuge neighbors; local, regional,

and national media; and Congressional staff members. Contacts include a diverse array of publics from varied social, economic, cultural, and educational backgrounds, some of which may have competing goals and objectives.

7. Purpose of Contacts

Contacts are to resolve operational problems, plan and coordinate work, gain compliance with policies, and advise and consult on technical matters. Work involves participation in conferences, meetings, hearings or presentations involving problems and issues of considerable consequence or importance. The employee represents and speaks for the Service in the technical areas of his/her specialization and has authority to make joint decisions with cooperating organizations and committees. Incumbent often has to justify, defend, negotiate, or settle matters involving significant or controversial issues. Employee must possess such personal qualities as persuasiveness, imagination, and insight to deal effectively with others, resolve conflicts, and to gain acceptance of recommendations and decisions. The employee serves as the refuge's primary spokesperson to the media.

8. Physical Demands

The work involves frequent on-site visits requiring some physical exertion such as walking over wet, rough, uneven or rocky terrain; bending, crouching, stooping, stretching, reaching, lifting, or similar activities. The work requires average agility and dexterity. The employee must have the ability to work under pressure and tight deadlines. Should be capable of using off-road vehicles, watercraft, and possible travel in light aircraft.

9. Work Environment

The job requires both office and outdoor work. Offices and visitor centers are adequately lighted, heated, and ventilated. Temperature and weather extremes may be encountered in the performance of the outdoor work. The incumbent is expected to conduct duties in a safe and orderly manner so as not to endanger self, fellow workers, visitors, or property with which entrusted. The work may require wearing protective clothing and some employees may be required to carry a firearm for protection from hostile wildlife.

Position Classification Evaluation Statement

References: GS-0025 Park Ranger Series, GS-025, November 1985
GS-0023 Outdoor Recreation Planning Series, June 1970
GS-460 Forestry Series, June 1965, January 1980
Guide for the Evaluation of Professional Positions Engaged in Interpretive Work, December 1962
General Schedule Supervisory Guide, April 1993

Classification Supervisory Park Ranger, GS-0025-13
Supervisory Park Ranger, GS-0025-12
Supervisory Park Ranger, GS-0025-11 or Park Ranger, GS-0025-11
Park Ranger, GS-0025-9

Introduction and Background: This evaluation covers standardized “Visitor Services Manager” positions at grades GS-9 through GS-13. These position descriptions were prepared to describe a standardized set of duties, typical of employees who are responsible for the visitor services program on a national wildlife refuge, refuge complex, or wetland management district. (When the term “refuge” is used in this evaluation statement, it encompasses all three types of resource lands.) It is expected that only in rare circumstances would an employee performing this work not be covered by one of these PDs. Position descriptions covered by this evaluation were developed to recognize an expansion in refuge recreational programs and to implement a portion of the National Wildlife Refuge System report “Fulfilling the Promise.”

The work covered by these PDs implements laws mandating a greater emphasis on the recreational use of refuge lands (primarily in the Refuge Improvement Act of 1997). The employee provides a quality visitor experience through six types of priority refuge recreation activities – hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, wildlife photography, environmental education, and interpretation. The work includes both on-refuge activities and outreach activities performed on- and off-refuge. To conduct this work the incumbent works closely with other refuge programs and cooperating individuals and organizations outside of the Service.

At each grade the positions have a similar set of duties and responsibilities that are inherent with the refuge’s visitor services program. The different grades are directly related to differing complexities of a refuge’s visitor services program and the necessary skill set and level of responsibility appropriate to the complexity of the program. At the GS-13 level, the grade is also impacted by work at the regional and national levels.

Other standardized PDs have been developed to complement the Visitor Services Manager PDs and cover other work in the visitor services program, including subordinate technical and specialist support positions at several grade levels, professional educator positions with responsibility for a station’s environmental education program, and GS-0099 Student Trainee (Park Ranger) positions to be used for trainees appointed under the Student Career Experience Program.

Series Determination The GS-0025 series includes positions the duties of which are to supervise, manage, and/or perform work in the conservation and use of Federal park resources. (For the purpose of this classification standard the term “park” is not restricted to national parks, but includes various resource lands managed by the Department of the Interior, such as wildlife refuges.) Functions typical of the series include the development and operation of interpretive and recreational programs and the duties include dissemination of general, historical, and scientific information to visitors. The work of the positions is consistent with the GS-0025 series as the employee is responsible for the development and operation of refuge recreational and interpretive programs, personally and/or through subordinate staff.

The GS-0023 Outdoor Recreation Planning Series has traditionally been used for some Service refuge visitor services positions. On the surface, this series seems to be appropriate for the manager of the visitor services function on a refuge as it applies to positions whose primary concerns are planning, advising on, and coordinating the use of land, water, and related resources to provide opportunities for the creative use of leisure time outdoors. However, exclusion 5 in the GS-0025 classification standard states that work covered by the GS-0023 series is typically concerned with broad area, regional, state, or national plans and programs, and that positions in the GS-0023 series are typically not concerned with day-to-day work in parks or similar areas, or with the direction of park operations, or with the provision of immediate staff assistance to those who are dealing with operational problems. The responsibilities of these positions includes management of the day-to-day work of the visitor services staff, direction of the operations of a significant portion of the refuge, and providing staff assistance on visitor services issues to the station manager and to other programs on the station. The primary purpose for establishing these positions is the management of the visitor services program on a single refuge

or refuge complex. While the highest graded Visitor Services Managers are involved with area, regional, state, or national plans and programs, the work primarily involves a single refuge. For these reasons, exclusion 5 applies and the position is not assigned to the GS-0023 series.

Some refuge visitor services management responsibilities in the Service have also been assigned to the GS-485 Refuge Management series, however, this series requires a professional knowledge of the biological sciences, typically obtained through an undergraduate or higher degree. The requisite knowledges of these positions do not include a professional knowledge of the biological sciences, so this series does not apply.

The work performed, purpose of the organization, potential career paths, and desires of management are all consistent with the GS-0025 series and the position is classified to this series.

Title Determination: The basic title for positions in the GS-0025 series is "Park Ranger." Positions meeting the definition of "supervisory" under the GSSG are titled "Supervisory Park Ranger." Positions requiring that the employee maintain a law enforcement commission have the added parenthetical title "law enforcement" or "LE." The refuges program has requested that an organizational title of "Visitor Services Manager" be assigned to this group of positions as it better communicates the intent for establishing the positions and the scope of their authority. As this title does not conflict with OPM's titling instructions for other series, it is assigned as the organizational title.

Grade Determination: One of management's goals in preparing these position descriptions was to identify refuge level visitor services work at the GS-13 level in order to provide improved career opportunities for employees in the visitor services field as well as to provide a bridge from refuge level to higher graded positions at the regional and national levels. Previous to establishing the subject GS-13 position description there were no refuge level visitor services positions classified at the GS-13 level. An extensive study was done by HR staff to review the work done by refuge visitor services staff, the authorities delegated to a refuge visitor services program, and the role of the regional and national Visitor Services and Communications staff in supporting and providing guidance to refuge visitor services programs. The study also included a comparison to relevant classification guidance to prove or disprove that GS-13 level work was being performed. As the GS-0025 classification standard was initially written to support Park Ranger positions in the National Park Service, information on a number of larger national parks was obtained and used to provide the context in which to interpret the classification standard. A number of conversations were also held with Park Service regional office HR staff to obtain their understanding of the intent of the grading criteria in the GS-13 benchmark. In addition, business plans published by the Park Service for a number of national parks, information on the economic impact of several parks on the surrounding communities, and usage figures for all units of the national park system were reviewed. This information was particularly valuable when evaluating the intent for crediting GS-13 "park level" positions with a "very complex program." The outcome of this study was that the HR staff was unable to validate refuge level visitor services work which would support classification of positions at the GS-13 level. A significant part of the study findings have been incorporated into the grade evaluation of this evaluation.

Following the finding by HR staff that GS-13 positions couldn't be supported by the work currently performed and the authorities delegated to the refuge level, a meeting was held in June, 2004, with the Service's Classification Officer, Classification Specialists from two regions, the Regional Chiefs, National Wildlife Refuge System from two regions, a Regional Chief of Visitor Services and Communications, and other visitor services staff. From this meeting came a comprehensive list of characteristics which would be used to identify the most complex refuges in the refuge system. At this meeting the refuge subject matter experts also stated that it was a Service-wide philosophy to assign the most experienced visitor services staff to refuges and staff regional visitor services offices at minimum levels. Based on this philosophy, HR representatives to the meeting were able to validate that a small number of refuge Visitor Services Managers could be given credit for performing grade controlling work at the regional and national level instead of that work being credited to the Regional Visitor Services and Communications staff.

Because of the difficulty in validating GS-13 level work, to differentiate between GS-12 and GS-13 work, and the precedential nature of establishing GS-13 Park Ranger positions below the regional level, these two grades are evaluated first and the evaluation includes a detailed discussion of the findings and rationale for classifying positions at these two grades. At all grade levels the primary source of classification guidance was the classification standard for the GS-0025 series. At the GS-12 and GS-13 levels, additional standards were cross-referenced. The GS-0023 Outdoor Recreation Planning Series was referenced as this series has traditionally been used for some refuge visitor services positions and the work has many similarities to work covered by the GS-0025 series. Recommendations in the GS-0025 standard to cross-reference the GS-460 Forestry (Administration) grading criteria and the "Guide for the Evaluation of Professional Positions Engaged in Interpretive Work" were also followed.

GS-0025

The standard provides benchmark examples against which to evaluate the grade level. These are described in terms of *Nature of Assignment* and *Level of Responsibility*.

Nature of Assignment

At the GS-13 level, employees receive assignments that involve a high degree of judgment, resourcefulness, leadership skills, and expert problem solving abilities. They develop programs of broad scope with widespread impact and a high degree of complexity. The GS-13 Park Ranger is generally recognized as a technical expert or authority in his/her area of assignment. Rangers at this level typically perform work at organizational levels above the refuge level. (Where the work is performed at park level, the park has a very complex program where the ranger's assignments are of such magnitude, complexity, importance, and level of public interest that the ranger discharges a key role in planning and administration of the total park program, which may affect nationwide programs.) The work at this level is characterized by problems of a unique nature for which the typical available guides are basic laws, conservation and use principles, and agency and fundamental park management philosophies. GS-13 rangers: (a) assert technical leadership and provide staff coordination, review, and consultation on basic issues in assigned functions; (b) determine the need for, initiate, and/or recommend policies, program procedures, and standards to be used as guides by park managers, rangers, contractors, concessionaires, lessees, and others in a variety of situations; (c) review operating programs for quality and effectiveness; and (d) develop a variety of original plans, concepts, systems, and programs which involve significant departures from current practices, are highly controversial, and embody numerous complex variables.

Under this factor, GS-13 Park Rangers generally perform work at organizational levels above the park level (all of the GS-13 work examples in the standard describe work above park level.) However, grade 13 may be reached by a park level employee when the park has a very complex program where the ranger's assignment's are of such magnitude, complexity, importance, and level of public interest that the ranger discharges a key role in planning and administration of the total park program, which may affect nationwide programs.

Because the GS-0025 standard was written primarily to evaluate positions in the NPS, it is useful to have an understanding of the intent of a "very complex program" as described in the GS-13 benchmark description in the context of positions in the NPS. As the National Park Service is a sister bureau to the Fish and Wildlife Service, it is possible to make several comparisons between national parks and national wildlife refuges. Some of the characteristics of parks and refuges which may be compared and which suggest how this term should be interpreted include:

Organizational Placement and Relationship of Park or Refuge to Regional Director. The superintendent of a park or park complex is directly supervised by the Regional Director. For a wildlife refuge, there are typically two additional intermediate supervisors between the Refuge Manager and Regional Director - a Program Supervisor and the Regional Chief of Refuges. The addition of supervisory layers typically influences the amount of authority, independence, and the types and level of guidance provided to subordinate organizational levels.

Grade of Park Superintendents and Refuge Managers. A small number of the largest national parks have SES superintendents and a number of parks have GS-15 superintendents. Within the Service, essentially the only SES field positions are Regional Directors and the highest graded refuge manager is a GS-14. The grade of the manager has a close correlation to the complexity of the organization managed.

Degree of Autonomy and Delegated Authority of Park Superintendent or Refuge Manager. The parks tend to be more self sufficient and self contained. Functions such as contracting and human resources are delegated to the individual park or park complex and are performed by staff assigned to the park. Within the Service, these functions are centralized and performed by regional support staffs. Within the Service, the refuges program also has several divisions with region-wide responsibility in functional areas such as biology, fire, law enforcement, planning, and visitor services and communications. These regional divisions include technical experts who are responsible for advising regional and refuge staffs, establishing or recommending regional policy within their area of specialization, and serving as liaison between field stations and higher headquarters.

Concessions. Many of the National Parks have extensive concession activities which are overseen by park staff, to include large hotels and restaurants. On those refuges with concessions, the scope is considerably narrower.

Staff and Budget. The complexity of a national park is also related to the funding and staffing levels. One example for comparison is the 1999 financial summary from the Denali National Park Business Plan. (Denali has a large program, budget, and staff size and substantial infrastructure. While these measurable characteristics are significantly less than on a number of parks such as Yellowstone, Yosemite, and Grand Canyon, this evaluator believes that Denali is more representative of the intent of “a very complex program” than are these “super parks.”) The Business Plan reports a park staff of 186 employees and available funds of 14.7 million dollars. The Park staff and budget can be compared with Kenai NWR, which has been identified as an example of a refuge with one of the largest and most complex visitor services programs in the National Wildlife Refuge System. Kenai’s total staff is approximately 45 and its budget is in the \$4-5 million range. On a national park, the Visitor Experience and Enjoyment section provides a range of services similar to that provided by the Visitor Services branch on a wildlife refuge. The Denali Visitor Experience and Enjoyment staff included 83 employee and the available funds were 2.7 million dollars. The permanent visitor services staff at Kenai is approximately 15.

Number of Visitors. Another indicator that may be indicative of a “very complex program” is the number of visitors, i.e., the number of customers being served. The most visited refuge in the Service in FY-2003 was the Upper Mississippi NWR with nearly 3.8 million visitors. This visitation is exceeded by 11 national parks. The tenth most visited refuge, Wheeler NWR had an annual visitation over 655,000. This visitation is exceeded at 99 national parks.

At the GS-12 level the standard describes the nature of assignments as involving application of advanced techniques; resolving problems involving novel, undeveloped, or controversial aspects of resource interpretation and use; and solving problems without benefit of adequate, consistent, or noncontroversial data or data sources. They direct complex programs in resource management, interpretation, and/or visitor services. This is generally consistent with the work found on the refuges with a large and complex visitor services program

Based on the comparison of the characteristics above, the information provided by subject matter experts on a number of refuges with large visitor services program, and the benchmark description of duties performed by GS-12 park rangers, no common body of standardized work was found to support the intent of a "very complex program" as described for a GS-13 Nature of Assignment. However, the realignment of substantive regional duties and authority which occupy a substantial part of the time to a senior Visitor Services Manager on a national wildlife refuge meets the intent of the benchmark Nature of Assignments description at grade of GS-13 for a very small number of positions. For a refuge with a large visitor services program but without delegated regional or national level duties, responsibilities, and authority, the major duties and responsibilities are adequately described in nature of Assignments benchmark at the GS-12 level.

Level of Responsibility

Work on a large refuge is generally similar to that described in the standard, However, the standard states that the responsibilities of GS-13 rangers include representing and speaking for the agency in the program area to which assigned and having authority to make joint decisions with cooperating and intra-agency committees. This level of authority exceeds that which would be typically delegated to the chief of the visitor services branch on a refuge. The responsibility of a Senior Visitor Services Managers on the most complex refuges partially meets the benchmark GS-13 Level of Responsibility, however the authority routinely exercised would typically be somewhat below that described in the standard. Positions with the delegated authority to perform duties at the regional level would fully meet this factor, however, those with primarily refuge level authority would not.

At the GS-12 level, the standard states that employees are usually given broad general objectives and relative priorities for completion of projects or assignments, and are guided, additionally, by basic policies of the employing jurisdiction. They enjoy marked freedom from technical control and are expected independently to select techniques, establish methods and procedures for studying and resolving particular problems, handle conflict situations, and otherwise carry assignments through to completion. Controversial policy questions are resolved by joint review and consultation with the supervisor, who reviews completed work for adequacy in meeting program objectives and agreement with overall policies, but generally not for format or technical considerations. GS-12 rangers initiate new projects or activities, after major changes in policies or programs, jointly with the supervisor or with rangers or specialists at higher organizational levels. Rangers

at the GS-12 level typically are relied upon as authorities within their organizations concerning their particular program function or activity. Little or no technical guidance is provided to them unless they encounter critical or controversial situations or issues. Their decisions and recommendations are rarely changed by higher authority, and then, usually because of new or modified policy. Public contacts are broad and varied. Park Rangers, GS-12, establish and maintain continuing working relationships with personnel of other Federal and non-Federal agencies to exchange ideas and information on methods, problems, and developments of mutual interest, to coordinate work on adjoining lands, or to plan and coordinate joint projects. GS-12 rangers serve as spokespersons for their function, park, or office in contacts with community leaders, state officials, and leaders of interest groups in order to obtain objectives of agency policy and concurrently maintain or establish good public relations. They may represent their agency in various interagency cooperative committees, but generally they do not have the authority to commit the agency to a given course of action.

The level of responsibility for the senior Visitor Services Manager on a refuge with a large visitor services program is consistent with the description of GS-12 level work, above. The manager would be expected to have contact with groups and individuals that include visitors, regional staff, state law enforcement personnel, and other state and federal employees. He/she would be relied on to answer questions, coordinate events, resolve problems and synthesize divergent viewpoints. He/she would also be relied on to carry out daily operations and the work would be considered authoritative. The work would be reviewed for compliance with overall Service policy. He/she would serve as a spokesperson for the refuge, be considered an authority within the organization, and be authorized to initiate new projects based on policy change. This work does not meet the GS-13 level where Rangers represent and speak for the agency in the program area to which assigned and have authority to make joint decisions with cooperating and intra-agency committees.

For a position to be classified at GS-13, it must fully meet the intent of both factors (Nature of Assignments and Level of Responsibility) in the classification standard. When work covered the standardized positions is evaluated under the GS-0025 standard, the Nature of Assignment and Level of Responsibility are both comparable to the GS-12 level, resulting in a grade of GS-12. For a small number of positions with responsibilities and delegated authority at the regional level or above, the Nature of Assignment and Level of Responsibility are both comparable to the GS-13 level, resulting in a grade of GS-13.

GS-023

This series typically covers work involving broad area, regional, state, or national plans and programs. Positions in this series are not typically concerned with day-to-day work in parks or similar areas, or with the direction of park operations. However, it is appropriate to cross-reference the grading criteria for positions in this or other series, if the work is similar. Because the scope of the Visitor Services Manager positions are generally encompassed by a single refuge or complex, this work falls short of the intent of a GS-13 as described in both work examples in this standard. These involve:

Serving as functional leader or program chief in charge of a major phase of the agency's total program at the regional level and directing the preparation of instructions, information, and guidelines for use on a region-wide basis.

Reviewing or conducting studies of national significance and providing advice and assistance on policy matters to regional and field offices, States, and local agencies.

Several of the work examples at the GS-12 level in this standard are not directly comparable to the Visitor Services Manager positions, either because they involve area wide work or planning work that is not typical of that done on a refuge. However, one example is similar. In this example, the employee develops guidelines, standards, and procedures for recreation planning elements such as: measuring and reporting recreation use and predicting demand; analyzing recreation values; establishing and maintaining fee programs; operating and managing concessions; and other resource planning and management aspects. This example of GS-12 duties and responsibilities compares favorably to a Visitor Services Manager on a refuge with a large visitor services program.

GS-460 Forester (Administration). Part II of this standard is used to evaluate forester positions with a parenthetical title of "administration" and is used for foresters who perform administrative and managerial work. This part of the standard describes work in the form of benchmarks against which to classify a position. Under this standard, a GS-13 is typically responsible for technical and administrative supervision of *a forest* (italics added) involving the managerial planning, coordination, and execution of programs of full complexity. The forester is also directly responsible for functions such as

engineering and general business and for administrative management and services for the forest area administered. The organizational placement described for a GS-13 forester places him/her directly under the regional administrator - a significantly higher level in the organization than the Visitor Services Manager on a FWS field station. The scope and responsibility of the work described in this benchmark are equivalent to the work done by a refuge manager. The grading criteria for a GS-13 Forester (Administration) clearly exceeds the scope of work, level of delegated authority, and organizational placement of a refuge visitor services manager, therefore it is not appropriate to cross-reference the standard at this grade level for a visitor services manager position.

At the GS-12 level, the standard describes work involving technical and administrative supervision and management of a *forest area* (italics added) with especially complex and difficult programs, typically of substantial magnitude and scope. Conditions create numerous complex problems and conflicting requirements whose resolution may have public impacts out of proportion to the real facts and issues. These characteristics are somewhat similar to those of a Park Ranger on the largest and most complex refuges as the forester at this grade is responsible for portion of a forest which would be somewhat comparable to one program area within a refuge.

Guide for the Evaluation of Professional Positions Engaged in Interpretive Work. This guide is intended for use in evaluating professional positions (i.e., those in a formally recognized professional discipline such as engineering, biology, or geology). Cross-referencing this standard has some utility in classifying some nonprofessional positions performing interpretive work. This standard describes work in the form of benchmarks against which to classify a position. The standard states that "GS-13 employees are required to possess a broad knowledge of their subject-matter field and an authoritative knowledge of these fields as they relate to the values of the area. They are required to exercise critical judgement, ingenuity, and creativity of a high order in the evaluation and synthesis of research findings and the integration of those findings into existing or planned interpretive programs." The depth of knowledge identified at the GS-13 level is inconsistent with a position (such as a park ranger) which doesn't require that the employee possess an academic degree. The requisite "authoritative knowledge" in a scientific field is not typical of employees in the Park Ranger Series and can not be required for the purposes of recruitment, so the standard at this grade level does not include appropriate classification criteria.

At the GS-12 level, the standard describes assignments which involve responsibility for long-range development, planning, and administration, or both, for an interpretive program. Characteristics of the interpretive program includes a synthesis of apparently unrelated evidence from more than one subject-matter field into an integrated, objective, and complete picture of the relative values and importance of an historical site. The primary story of the area represents one complex major theme and there is a least one secondary story, usually in an unrelated field. The standard provides a relevant illustration of a scenic forest or park which serves to illustrate several branches of natural history, i.e., it includes an important ecological, botanical, zoological, and/or geologic story or features. Although this level also assumes the interpreter has a scientific degree, the products have similarities to interpretive programs on a refuge and they would be graded no higher than GS-12.

General Schedule Supervisory Guide. Some visitor services manager positions (as indicated on the OF-8 for the individual positions) meet the Guide's definition of "supervisor," in that they spend at least 25 percent of the time providing administrative and technical supervision to subordinate staff. However, no positions were found for which supervisory work was grade controlling. This was due to the relatively low base grade level of supervised staff when compared to the work personally performed by the Visitor Services Manager and that there were few, if any refuges that employed a subordinate staff of a size that would support two or more subordinate supervisory or leader positions (as needed to credit factor level 3-3 in the GSSG).

GS-0025-11 Position

The GS00-25-11 position was evaluated against the GS-11 benchmark in the GS-0025 classification standard.

Comparable to the Nature of Assignment description in the benchmark example, the position consists of diverse complex technical and/or administrative problems. The employee independently identifies the nature of the problem and the kinds of information, criteria, and techniques needed to arrive at a solution. The employee considers and selects approaches or solutions from several alternatives and sometimes makes substantial adaptations. The employee is required to have substantial knowledge and understanding of the impact that the management of historical, cultural, and/or natural

resources may have on communities and other interested groups. The position is comparable to the first work example in which the employee plans, develops, coordinates, and directs programs related to visitor services and resource management. He/she also determines type, amount, and location of work to be accomplished for each activity, calculates cost of each activity based on staffing, equipment, supplies, and material requirements, and drafts and submits for approval the annual budget and operating program.

It is also comparable to the description of the level of responsibility described in the standard at the GS-11 level where the supervisor specifies the objectives and the general scope of assignments, the employee develops work plans and devises techniques covering routine and nonroutine activities, and selects, modifies, and uses the techniques for carrying out assignments. Completed work is usually spot-checked for sound approach and accomplishment of program objectives, and management plans are reviewed in draft prior to completion.

GS-0025-9 Position

The GS00-25-9 position was evaluated against the GS-9 benchmark in the GS-0025 classification standard.

The nature of assignment of the position is consistent with that described in the standard in that the employee applies resourcefulness, judgement, and ingenuity in the accomplishment of tasks such as the formulation and execution of resources and interpretive plans and programs. The employee oversees the development and execution of programs, including the work of others. The work is consistent with all three examples in the standard.

The level of responsibility is also consistent with that described in the standard, in that the supervisor outlines major objectives, critical deadlines, and the overall nature of expected results. The supervisor or other regional expertise is available to advise on how to deal with unexpected and unusual conditions or work situations that may result in significant controversy. Guides are generally applicable, however, the employee must select from alternative methods or approaches. Because the refuge's visitor services program is of limited size and complexity, there are many precedents for work already done on the refuge and at other refuges in the region and nation which may be reviewed and used as examples for the visitor services program.

Summary and Classification Findings

The positions are classified to the GS-0025 series, with grades from GS-9 through GS-13, as identified on the individual OF-8s. The basic title for all positions is Park Ranger. For positions meeting the definition of supervisor in the GSSG, "Supervisory" precedes the title. For positions requiring a law enforcement commission, the parenthetical title "law enforcement" or "LE" is added. All positions are FLSA exempt under the administrative exemption, and for some positions the executive exemption also applies. The position sensitivity for positions requiring a law enforcement commission or those who serve as line supervisor over a commissioned law enforcement officer is critical sensitive. For other positions, position sensitivity should be decided on a case-by-case basis.

In selecting the appropriately graded PD for a specific position, the position description language should accurately describe the level of work appropriate to the assigned organization. The attached guidance is provided to further clarify the intent for each grade level. For positions at the GS-12 and GS-13 level, the discussion of grade determination, above, as well as the GS-12 and GS-13 benchmark grading criteria will further clarify the Office of Personnel Management's intent in grading positions in the GS-0025 series.

CLASSIFICATION GUIDANCE
VISITOR SERVICES MANAGERS
STANDARD POSITION DESCRIPTIONS

The information below provides instructions for implementing the GS-9 through GS-13 Visitor Services Manager positions. Although these positions are classified in the Park Ranger series, and that is their official title, the organizational title for this set of position descriptions is “Visitor Services Manager.”

- These PDs are meant to apply only where managing the visitor services function is essentially a full-time job. If supplemental work has to be assigned to the visitor services manager because there isn’t enough visitor services work, or there are other competing demands at the refuge and management decides to assign significant major duties which aren’t identified in the standard PDs, the supervisor and HR specialist should discuss whether one of these SPDs is applicable. If the visitor services workload is full-time for only part of each year, a career seasonal appointment may be appropriate using one of these PDs.
- Most of the major duties for all levels of these positions are inherently part of managing the visitor services function on any refuge and have been included at all grades.
- The grade of a refuge GS-13 Visitor Services Manager position is supported by significant regional duties, responsibilities, and authorities and, as a recognized technical expert, by the employee having an active role in developing national policy in one or more areas of the visitor services program. These responsibilities result from management’s deliberate delegation of this work to the field position. Regions have the option to assign this work to either the regional office or to a field station. Once delegated to a field station, these same duties and responsibilities can’t also be credited to the regional office staff and it is very unlikely that nonsupervisory GS-13 positions could be simultaneously supported at a field station and in the regional office. (The grades of Regional Chiefs of Visitor Services and Communications are not directly affected by a decision to delegate staff work to a field position as they retain overall regional VS program responsibility.)
- Reassignment of an employee from a properly classified position into one of the SPDs should be grade neutral.
- The existence of an SPD at a higher grade level does not automatically translate into a higher graded position even if the refuge has the potential of a more complex visitor services program than currently exists.
 - If the grade of a visitor services manager position is raised due to projected duties, the supervisor and HR Specialist should ensure that the duties will be performed within a reasonable time, and a position review or audit should be done within six months or so of the time the position is encumbered.
 - When implementing these SPDs to promote an incumbent due to an accretion of duties, all requirements in the Department’s Merit Promotion Plan must be met, including

conducting a position audit to validate that the work is currently being performed and the characteristics of the station's visitor services program are as described in the SPD.

- Each of these PDs represents a different full performance level for managing the visitor services program; the complexities of the program and refuge will determine which PD is appropriate.
- It is the belief of the SMEs that all GS-12 and 13 positions will meet the definition for supervisor from the General Schedule Supervisory Guide (which includes spending at least 25% of the time performing supervisory duties and providing full administrative and technical supervision to subordinate staff). It is also their belief that some GS-11 positions and no GS-9 positions will meet this definition. Some GS-11 and GS-9 positions which don't meet the GSSG definition may meet the definition of supervisor in 5 USC 7103 ("Title V" or "CSRS"). Options for supervisory designation and title are included in the PDs. In tentative applications of the GSSG for a number of locations, it appears that there are no locations which will support a higher grade under the GSSG than they earn under the GS-0025 classification standard. A unique PD should be used if the grade is supportable only under the GSSG.
- It is not intended that the VS Manager's grade be classified at or above the grade level of the Refuge Manager.
- There can only be one Visitor Services Manager at a refuge. Positions subordinate to the VSM will typically be in the GS-0025 series, with organizational titles of "Visitor Services Specialist" or "Visitor Services Technician." Some locations may have professional educators performing environmental education work in the GS-1700, Education Group.
- A Visitor Services Manager SPD cannot be used for both a refuge complex and for an individual refuge within that complex. A VS manager with complex-wide responsibility and authority (responsible for functions such as budgeting, planning, staffing, media relations, and studies and analysis) cannot have subordinates (other VS Specialists working at the refuge level who may or may not report to the Refuge Chief) who are credited with responsibility and authority for the same functions on an individual refuge within the complex.
- At most grades, the position may be used for a full-performance level position or for a developmental position with a higher full-performance level.

Determining the Grade Level

The grade controlling differences are in the complexity of the refuge's visitor services program, the degree to which complex analysis and planning are done "in-house" on the refuge, and (for the GS-13s only) when the scope and impact of the employee's work has a substantial component that reaches beyond the refuge and its neighbors. The complexity of the visitor services programs for different grade levels are described as "complex," "moderately complex," and "of limited scope and complexity." Below is a clarification of these terms and/or examples to assist supervisors and HR specialists to understand the intended application of the different levels of PDs.

	COMPLEXITY	OTHER CONSIDERATIONS
GS-13	Manages a complex visitor services program which meets the benchmark description in the GS-0025 classification standard for GS-12	Only an extremely limited number of GS-13 visitor services manager positions will be established. It was estimated by the subject matter

	<p>positions. In addition, is considered to be a region-wide and Service-wide technical expert for one or more visitor services issues (such as environmental education or establishment of “friends” organizations) and spends a significant amount of time in activities above the refuge level. As the regional and Service-wide responsibilities impact the grade, this work can’t also be credited to justify GS-13 regional office positions.</p> <p>The refuge’s visitor services program meets all or essentially all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • multiple interest groups, partners and a complex volunteer program, • significant user conflicts, • significant off-site visitor services and communication program, • high congressional and/or public interest, • controversial visitor use and/or management issues, • all compatible priority public uses (this will almost always include five or six of the primary uses), • proximity to metropolitan area or gateway community, • significant and multiple public safety issues (law enforcement, environmental contaminants, natural hazards, and illegal activities), • complex or conflicting jurisdictional authorities with other agencies and entities, • complex regulations, and • visitation approaching the field station recreational carrying capacity. 	<p>experts that no more than five to 10 refuges or refuge complexes nationwide have programs with the <u>potential</u> to support this grade level. It was also stated by the subject matter experts that several of the refuges have the potential to support a GS-13 position but this may take months, or possibly years, before their program actually supports this grade.</p>
GS-12	<p>Manages a complex visitor services program which is equivalent to the benchmark description in the GS-0025 classification standard for GS-12</p>	<p>The subject matter experts developed this list of characteristics occurring in a complex VS Program. They are listed from most</p>

	<p>positions in the characteristics of the program, required knowledges, and authorities. (Only the first of the three illustrations of assignments in the standard is relevant; the other two illustrations aren't relevant as they describe positions with a broader scope than the visitor service manager positions.)</p>	<p>important/most complex to less important/less complex.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High degree of Conflict Management • Full Suite of Priority and Non-priority Uses • Significant Public Safety Issues Present • Delegated Authority • Concession Management • Active Partners • Environment Education Program • Focused Interest Groups • Fragile National Resources • Jurisdictional Overlap and/or Lack of Jurisdictional Authority • Size of VS Staff • Wide Range of Facilities • Interpretive Programs • High Visitation • Grants • Volunteer Programs • Congressional Interest • Fee, Permit Programs • LMRD • VS Training Site • Environmental Hazards • Tribal Impacts, treaties • Budget Responsibilities • Complex Regulations • Contracting • Cultural Resources • Proximity to Metropolitan areas or Gateway Economic Issues • Multi-agency Visitor Center. • Active Habitat Management Program
GS-11	<p>Manages a visitor services program of moderate complexity. When complex analysis, planning, and similar work needs to be done (such as researching, conducting studies, analyzing, and</p>	

	making recommendations concerning recreational carrying capacity, visitor use, and economic impact) the employee will receive technical assistance from employees with regional visitor services responsibilities (regional office staff or a higher graded field station Visitor Services Manager – typically a GS-13).	
GS-09	Manages a visitor services program of limited scope and complexity. The employee would participate in complex analysis, planning, and similar work (such as researching, conducting studies, analyzing, and making recommendations concerning recreational carrying capacity, visitor use, and economic impact), but would work under the lead of employees with regional visitor services responsibilities (i.e., either regional office staff or a higher graded field station Visitor Services Manager – typically a GS-13). Although the GS-9 Visitor Services Manager might have other collateral duties, the purpose for establishing the position is to oversee and conduct visitor services activities and he/she would perform VS duties on a full-time or nearly full time basis.	